

**Statement**

**by**

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**Representative of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**

**at**

**the 6th Committee of the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly of the**

**United Nations**

**On**

**Agenda Item 84**

**The scope and application of the principle of universal jurisdiction**

**17 October 2012**

**New York**

**Mr. Chairman,**

My delegation appreciates the international efforts to rule out any hope of safe havens for those who have committed heinous international crimes.

The principle of universal jurisdiction is a twofold concept belonging, to both international law and municipal law, and tries to ensure that individuals and groups who commit grave offences do not do so with impunity and are brought to justice.

Ambiguity exists not only with regard to which crimes or what offences exactly constitute crimes under international law but also to whom universal jurisdiction may be applied. The question of when can a state invoke universal jurisdiction, and to what extent this reflects international customary law, and if so for which crimes, has been debated for years.

The different approaches pursued by different countries on its application and the range of its coverage have resulted in subjective considerations which may be undermining the common and united resolve to fight impunity.

There seems to be a consensus that there is no widely established state practice of universal jurisdiction yet. We believe that States exercising universal jurisdiction over persons suspected of any crime

**Mr. Chairman,**

The principle of universal jurisdiction is enshrined in the Criminal Code of Ethiopia as complementary jurisdictional instrument in the fight against impunity.

In practice, Ethiopia attaches significant value to this legal principle, and commits itself to its application with especial care not to abuse/disguise the principle.